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AUTHOR	Wonacott, Michael E.
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ABSTRACT

In July 2000, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 officially replaced the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). WIA requires individual assessment of skill levels and service needs and development of an individual service strategy for each youth participant. WIA requires all youth programs to make 10 program elements available to all participants. These elements are tutoring, study skills, instruction leading to secondary school completion, alternative secondary school services, summer employment linked to academic and occupational learning, paid and unpaid work experiences, occupational skill training, leadership development, supportive services, adult mentoring, follow-up services for at least 12 months after participation, and comprehensive guidance and counseling. Unlike JTPA, WIA eliminates economic disadvantage as an eligibility criterion for adult and dislocated worker services. Instead, the following levels of services for adults are to be accessed sequentially: core services; intensive services; and training services. WIA's governance structure includes a state work force investment board and a local work force investment board for each designated local area. Consistent with the performance-based approach in the Government Performance and Results Act, WIA emphasizes outcomes rather than inputs, results rather than process, and continuous improvement rather than management control. Under WIA, service providers deliver youth services under competitive grants or contracts. With only limited exceptions, one-stop

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training services are delivered through a system of individual training accounts. (MN)

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Michael E. Wonacott

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National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education
The Ohio State University
1900 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1090

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IN Brief
Fast Facts for Policy and Practice
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by Michael E. Wonacott

The Workforce Investment Act and CTE

On July 1, 2000, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) was officially repealed and replaced by the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (***Training and Employment Guidance Letter*** [TEGL] No. 3-99 2000a). The differences in theme and detail between JTPA and WIA have important implications for career and technical education (CTE) at both the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Youth Services

JTPA had two separate youth funding streams, disadvantaged youth and summer youth, with the summer youth stream receiving by far the larger funding (Employment and Training Administration [ETA] 1998b). WIA replaces these with a single youth funding stream. Programs must provide summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning, but the mix of year-round and summer activities is left to local discretion. Eligible persons are low-income youth ages 14-21 who face one or more of six barriers to school completion or employment: deficient in basic literacy skills; school dropout; homeless, runaway, or foster child; pregnant or a parent; offender; or requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. Older youth, ages 19-21, can also be served simultaneously under the adult funding stream.

WIA requires individual assessment of skill levels and service needs and development of an individual service strategy for each youth participant. WIA requires all youth programs to make 10 program elements available to each participant (ETA 1998a):

- Tutoring, study skills, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school
- Alternative secondary school services
- Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning
- Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing
- Occupational skill training
- Leadership development opportunities
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after participation
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral

In line with youth development theory and practices (National Youth Employment Coalition 1999), WIA prescribes more basic outcomes for youth (attainment of work readiness, occupational skills, and employment) than for adults (both employment and attainment of educational and occupational credentials) (Kaufman and Wills 1999). The clear intent of WIA (TEGL No. 3-99) is to move away from short-term interventions and toward the long-term development of young people.

Implications for CTE. Secondary CTE programs that wish to provide WIA youth services must accommodate the great changes in theme and detail introduced by WIA—focus on long-term development rather than short-term intervention; summer employment as only one part of an integrated, year-round program to increase youth's work readiness, occupational skills, *and* employment; provision (or contract with another provider for provision) of all 10 required program elements; assessment of each youth's skills levels and service needs; development of an individual service strategy for each youth; and limits on funding devoted to non-low-income and in-school youth.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

Unlike JTPA, WIA eliminates economic disadvantage as an eligibility criterion (ETA 1998a). Instead, three levels of services for adults and dislocated workers (and youth aged 19-21 receiving services under adult funding) are to be accessed sequentially. More extensive levels of service are for individuals unable to obtain employment through the more basic services.

Core services are available to all as a lifetime community resource to enhance individuals' job skills as they move up the career ladder. They may be self-service (e.g., accessing information on the labor market, eligible training providers, local performance outcomes, One-Stop activities, filing claims for Unemployment Insurance, and supportive services) or they may be counselor-assisted services (e.g., intake, orientation to the One-Stop system, initial assessment, job search and job placement, career counseling, establishing eligibility assistance through other programs, and follow-up services).

Intensive services may be provided to adults and dislocated workers who are (1) unemployed and unable to obtain employment through core services or (2) employe ‡ but who need additional services to obtain or retain employment that allows for self-sufficiency. Intensive services include assessment of skill levels (i.e., diagnostic testing), development of an individual employment plan, group and individual counseling, career planning, case management, and short-term prevocational services.

Training services may be provided to individuals who meet the eligibility requirements for intensive services but are unable to obtain or retain employment through intensive services. Training services must be directly linked to occupations in demand in the local area or in another area to which the participant is willing to move.

Implications for CTE. Community and technical colleges that provide CTE programs (Feldman 1998) should note that training services are the *last* resort; WIA has a clear emphasis on placing adults and dislocated workers in employment as quickly as possible, with the least intensive intervention needed for placement. However, intensive services such as assessment, counseling, and prevocational education—provided by many community and technical colleges under JTPA—remain an integral part of the WIA system.

Governance and Structure

WIA's governance structure includes a State Workforce Investment Board and a Local Workforce Investment Board for each designated local area (Feldman 1998). The majority of members on both boards must be business representatives. In addition, the state board must include representatives of individuals and organi-

zations that have experience in work force development, including chief executive officers of community colleges. The local board must include representatives of education providers, One-Stop partners, and providers of adult education and literacy services. Each local board appoints a subgroup of its own members as the Local Youth Council.

Local boards also designate operators of One-Stop Centers, which *may* include postsecondary educational institutions and secondary area vocational education schools, and enter into Memoranda of Understanding with One-Stop Partners, which *must* include postsecondary institutions providing vocational education activities under the Perkins Act. Local boards identify providers of training services, the third and most intensive level of adult and dislocated worker services. All postsecondary institutions certified under the Higher Education Act and providing programs that lead to 2- or 4-year degrees or certificates are eligible as training providers for an initial period of no more than 1 year; continuing eligibility depends on meeting or exceeding performance criteria.

Implications for CTE. WIA's provisions for governance and structure allow plenty of opportunity for involvement of CTE providers, especially at the postsecondary level (ibid.), as eligible members of state or local boards and Local Youth Councils, as eligible One-Stop operators, and as eligible providers of youth, core, and/or intensive services. At the very least, CTE providers should develop and maintain contact with local boards, Youth Councils, and One-Stop operators to make their interest in WIA activities known and promote their services.

Providers and Performance Accountability

Consistent with the performance-based approach in the Government Performance and Results Act (ETA 1998a), WIA emphasizes outcomes rather than inputs, results rather than process, and continuous improvement rather than management control. To implement those goals, WIA sets up a system of performance indicators, including core indicators and customer satisfaction indicators, which are identified in the legislation. Each state negotiates an acceptable level of statewide performance on each core and customer satisfaction indicator with the Secretary of Labor; each state than negotiates local performance levels with each local area.

Core indicators measure participant outcomes (TEGL No. 7-99). One set is applied to younger youth (ages 14-18): diploma or equivalent attainment rate, skill attainment rate, and retention rate (e.g., in advanced training or apprenticeships). Another set is applied separately to adults and dislocated workers: entered employment rate, employment retention rate after 6 months, earnings change after 6 months, and educational/occupational credential rate upon employment. The same set of adult/dislocated worker indicators also applies to older youth (ages 19-21) served under the adult funding stream, except that the educational/occupational credential rate applies upon entry into postsecondary education, advanced training, or employment. Participants served under more than one funding stream are counted in *each* applicable indicator.

Implications for CTE. CTE providers who provide youth services under WIA must provide information on the three core indicators for younger youth; those who provide training services for adults must provide information on the four core indicators for adults, and so on. CTE providers may need to develop the capacity to collect and report performance information in order maintain eligibility after the initial period. In particular, postsecondary educational institutions may find it difficult to use Unemployment Insurance information to identify employment, earnings, and retention outcomes of adults, dislocated workers, and older youth (Feldman 1998); they may wish to take advantage of provisions in WIA for help in meeting extraordinary costs.

Postsecondary institutions should also take full advantage of the requirement that governors solicit recommendations on statewide performance levels from service providers in the state and take them into account in setting state performance levels (ibid.). Finally, the possibility of local boards adjusting statewide performance levels upward means that CTE providers will want to play an active role in local decision making.

Individual Training Accounts

Under WIA (ETA 1998a), youth services are delivered by service providers under competitive grants or contracts; One-Stop core services and intensive services may be delivered by One-Stop operators or partners or under contract with service providers. However, with only limited exceptions, One-Stop training services are delivered through a system of Individual Training Accounts; in effect, eligible participants receive vouchers and decide for themselves which training to purchase (following stated guidelines) from which training provider.

Implications for CTE. Eligible training providers are required to furnish One-Stop operators with information on their training programs and outcomes for program participants; One-Stop operators then make that information available to participants, who use it to make informed choices about which qualified training program best meets their individual needs. As training providers, CTE providers will need to ensure not only that they furnish One-Stop Operators with required information but also that One-Stops in turn provide accurate and current information to participants.

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CTE NATIONAL DISSEMINATION CENTER
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
1900 KENNY ROAD, COLUMBUS OH 43210-1090